DER Regulatory Education and Outreach

Get the latest information on installing and permitting cutting-edge energy technologies!

The U.S. Department of Energy, the Northeast-Midwest Institute, and several local organizations are co-hosting Distributed Energy Resources Road Shows in the Northeast U.S. The Road Shows are one-day workshops for building code inspectors, fire marshals, and utility interconnection engineers to learn about the installation, interconnection, and operation of new energy technologies. Depending on the selection by local officials, working technologies such as fuel cells, microturbines, and photovoltaic (PV) systems will be displayed during each event.

Road Show date for Burlington, Vermont:
Monday, September 23, 2002

Location:
Burlington Electric Department
585 Pine Street
Burlington, Vermont 05401-4891

For more details or to register to attend one of the DER Road Shows in the Northeast, please contact:
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Overview

Over the next decade, distributed energy resources will help optimize the energy delivery infrastructure of the United States. For this to happen smoothly, industry, utilities and regulators will need to coordinate their efforts to create a streamlined process for siting and permitting distributed generation devices.

U.S. regulation of the energy industry takes place at the Federal, State, and local levels of government. For example, currently there are little or no national standards for installing or interconnecting distributed generation; Federal guidance is in the form of air and environmental quality regulations. State and municipal agencies, as well as local utilities, create specific rules for siting and permitting distributed generation that must be met before the units can be installed and interconnected to the local grid.

Local officials review many aspects of the technologies before approving them for installation. Some issues under consideration include safety, exhaust temperatures and venting, gas pressures, building structures, noise, fuel storage, space limitations, vibration and environmental impacts. In many cases the evaluation criteria differs between cities and counties within the same state. Thus, manufacturers and their customers must conduct extensive research before fulfilling orders and installing the equipment. This can cause significant delays in project schedules, and makes it difficult to fulfill immediate power needs.

Implementing consistent rules and processes within each state and nationwide will streamline the integration of distributed generation in our nation's energy infrastructure.

The U.S. Department of Energy Program

The Office of Distributed Energy & Electric Reliability at the U.S. Department of Energy supports a variety of long-term technology research and development programs in concert with industry to achieve "distributed-ness" within the energy industry. This includes supporting the U.S. regulatory infrastructure and leading education and outreach to facilitate the smooth deployment of these technologies.

Building infrastructure and deploying distributed generation may span over a decade, and the Department of Energy envisions participants from several tiers, including:

- Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and North American Electric Reliability Council Regional Transmission Organizations and Independent System Operators
- State Public Utility Commissions, Public Service Commissions, and state energy offices
- State environmental protection agencies
- County zoning and planning officials
- Municipal building code authorities and fire marshals
- Utility interconnection staff

The first step in this process has been DER Road Shows, in which the Department of Energy brings manufacturers and their products directly to interested city agencies. The one-day workshops include presentations of distributed energy technologies, including their installation and operation characteristics and the various codes and standards that apply to them. A facilitated discussion towards the end of the day engages local and state regulators into a dialogue with the manufacturers, allowing everyone to discuss local concerns, regulations, and technical issues.

For more information:

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